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One and One and One is Three

While the DC Universe is populated with legions of super-powered heroes and villains, ask anyone who the Big Three are and they know instantly: Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. These characters are the "superhero trinity" at DC—the company's flagship characters, instantly recognizable around the world.

And beginning this summer, the three of them will be together, once a week, in their own year-long saga entitled ***Trinity.***

"The new weekly will start the first week of June, and it will feature as its leads Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman," DCU Executive Editor *Dan DiDio* said. "Unlike our other weekly series, which were produced by a talented team of writers and artists, there will be one creative team on the lead story of every issue of ***Trinity*** for the entire fifty-two week run: *Kurt Busiek & Mark Bagley* with *Art Thibert* on inks. These guys are on board for the lead story in each and every issue fora year. The back half of the story will feature complementary stories plotted by Kurt that tie in to what happens in the first half; these stories will be written by *Fabian Nicieza* and drawn by *Tom Derenick, Scott McDaniel,* and others."

Will ***Trinity*** have any links to DC's other big summer event, ***Final Crisis?*** "***Trinity*** is its own event, and it's not tied to ***Final Crisis***—but what happens in this series will have ramifications within the DCU as a total. This is a story that tells the importance of Superman, Batman, & Wonder Woman in the DC Universe," DiDio said.

"One of the things that we're really focusing on this year at DC is how we're driving the different storylines through 2008. There will be a storyline that features Superman prominently in the ***Superman*** titles through 2008, there will be a storyline that features Batman prominently throughout his titles in 2008, and Wonder Woman will have her own strong storyline in her series. ***Final Crisis*** will be contained to the primary series and a couple of spin-off series and a couple of one shots, but doesn't crossover throughout the rest of the line. And ***Trinity*** will be its own story amid all of that, because it explores not just the history of Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman, but their impact on the DCU in the past years and for the future.

"***Trinity*** is something that will bring the focus back to these three characters, both individually and together to understand why they are the three greatest characters in comics.

Does this mean that, rather than featuring a series of story arcs, the entirity of the 544-page Busiek-Bagley saga will be a single multi-faceted tale? "Not only is there an overarching story by Kurt and Mark that takes us through the fifty-two issues," DiDio confirmed, "but also the backups feed out of those stories and spin out new characters that come from the lead storyline; or the backups will play against the lead storyline. It is rather cohesive storytelling..."

DiDio is aware that there are few artists in comics who could commit to producing 500+ pages in one year—but *Mark Bagley* has proven that he has what it takes with his eighteen-issues a year run on ***Ultimate Spider-Man,*** during which time he produced other special issues and annuals for Marvel. "Mark is an incredibly dedicated worker, and incredibly deadline driven. If anybody is going to be able to accomplish this feat, we know it's going to be him," DiDio said. "Mark is one of the most talented artists working today, and even though he'll be drawing a lot of Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman, ***Trinity*** is set in the DC Universe, so the entire Universe is the backdrop for the series. So, Mark, who's relatively new to the DC Universe, will have a chance to draw almost every character in the DC Universe over the course of the series."

"This is the largest single commitment to a project that I've made in any year during my comics career," Bagley told ***CSN,*** "but it's also a major factor in my decision to come to DC. The folks at Marvel always treated me very well, and I could have continued to be very comfortable working there—but Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman were characters I always wanted to draw. I've had an occasional opportunity to illustrate DC heroes, but until now, I've never been able to tackle a project of this magnitude that offered me the opportunity to illustrate virtually every major DC character—as an artist, this a dream come true!

"When I talked to DC about this, I made it clear that I only wanted to come on board if I could do the whole run—I didn't want to do one segment of the run, or half the run, or alternating issues. The opportunity to make my DC debut with a project of this magnitude, using their biggest characters, was too much for any artist to pass up."

"***Trinity*** offers Mark the chance to draw almost every single character in the DCU before it's all over," DiDio added. "It's great way for his legion of fans—and thanks to his record-breaking run on ***Ultimate Spider-Man,*** there are a lot of them!—to sample his work across the DCU, and that's exciting for us and for the readers."

What does writer *Kurt Busiek* bring to the project, as far as DC is concerned? "Kurt brings an understanding of the richness of the heroes and the larger universe," DiDio said. "He can take a view from the DC Universe from a very grounded perspective, as he's done in ***Astro City*** and ***Marvels***, but also, he has a wonderful understanding of the 'big story' picture, as we saw in ***JLA/Avengers***. He's a guy who knows intimately how these characters interact, and is able to weave so many aspects of their history into a rather comprehensive story that really pushes the tone and style of what the DC Universe is."

One of the advantages of constructing ***Trinity*** as its own self-contained year-long weekly event is that it offers the creators "a chance to open up each concept and allow them to breathe in their own right, so that a fan can really enjoy a *Kurt Busiek-Mark Bagley* story that features Superman, Batman and Wonder Woman... It's certainly new-reader friendly—whatever that means—but what it *really* is, though, is epic storytelling on a very personal level.

"There is a grand story behind the weekly—and more importantly, bits and pieces of what the weekly does will flow into the DC Universe in 2009. So there are bits and pieces that will be key to the DCU in the future—but again, that's something for when it's completed, not during the course of its run."

Trinity will be edited by *Mike Carlin,* who has plenty of weekly experience since he took over editor of ***Countdown*** part-way through the series' run. "For someone who came in midstream on a weekly book, which is probably one of, if not the most difficult kind of project to edit at DC, he and *Liz Gehrlein* have gotten a really good rhythm going with the series. Mike also has a great relationship with Kurt and Mark, and are coming in before the start of this series. They're looking forward to being a part of it every step of the way.

"I think there's an intensity in the pacing that's addictive and exciting – a weekly series moves so quickly, and you're working on so much at the same time, but when you see the results…let's look at the end results of ***Countdown*** right now: everything's coming together right now, and I believe that we've ironed out a lot of production problems, and we're keeping the same editorial team with the next weekly."

Carlin sees a real benefit to the more self-contained nature of ***Trinity.*** "As opposed to ***52*** and ***Countdown, Trinity*** will not be as literally tied to the moment it's published in the DC Universe,"Carlin said. "It will, however, show the reason that Batman, Superman and Wonder Woman are always important to the grand scheme of things wherever and whenever you are reading DCU continuity."

Carlin confirmed that this is more than just the story of Superman, Batman, and Wonder Woman. "There will be many appearances by other players in the DC Universe," Carlin said, "most notably the JLA and several of the core three's immediate supporting casts."

Carlin is particularly pleased to have Bagley in board. "Having done my years with the ***Superman*** titles as a virtual weekly, and having been the guy who helped wrap up ***Countdown*** I wouldn't have gone near a project like this *without Mark Bagley,*" Carlin asserted. "His run with Brian Bendis on ***Ultimate Spider-Man*** is an achievement to be admire—and, luckily for DC now, to be tapped into! Mark's been associated with this concept from the start—though obviously we had to wait for contractual obligations to be met elsewhere first!"

Is there any continuation of the multiverse concept into the pages of ***Trinity?*** "The bulk of ***Trinity*** is set in the DCU as we know it," Carlin said, "with a stop-over in another Universe or two!"

Trinity begins the first week in June and continues through the last week of May 2009.

by Cliff Biggers
(with Matt Brady)

Courtesy your friendly neighborhood comics outlet!

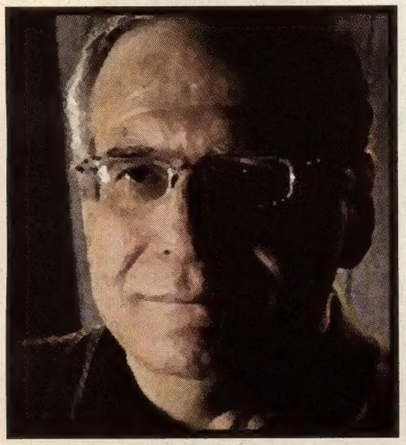
Comic Shop Newsarama

Produced by Comic Shop News in cooperation with Matt Brady and newsarama.com

Steve Gerber Passes

Steve Gerber, the writer best known for anirreverent duck trapped in a world he never made passed away on February 10th at the age of sixty from complications related to a chronic respiratory condition.

Gerber came to comics as a fan and reader; from there, he ventured into the world of fanzines, which brought him into contact with then-***Alter Ego*** editor *Roy Thomas*. When Thomas later moved to Marvel, he remembered Gerber and brought him to the company as a writer. Gerber worked on a variety of books, from horror projects like ***Son of Satan*** and ***Tales of the Zombie*** to superhero books like ***Omega the Unknown*** and ***The Defenders***—but it was his acclaimed ***Howard the Duck*** that elevated him to superstar status.



Howard the Duck, the story of an anthropomorphic duck trapped in the Marvel Universe, became a fan-favorite; the stories, which became increasingly quirky and more personal, had as much i common with Gerber's later independent comics work as they did with any mainstream Marvel tales.

Gerber worked for many years in the animation field while producing comics for a variety of independent publishers, including Malibu, for whom he he helped to develop their superheroic Ultraverse. Most recently, he has written several projects for DC, including the Dr. Fate stories featured in ***Countdown to Mystery***.

Gerber will remain a distinctive and inimitable comics storyteller whose work will continue to entertain new generations of readers; it's a shame that he wasn't able to continue adding to that body of work for many more years to come.

Mercurial Warren Ellis

Warren Ellis helped put Avatar on the map with projects like ***Black Summer***, ***Doktor Sleepless***, ***Crecy***, ***Black Gas***, and ***Gravel***—and in April, he continues that trend with his newest Avatar series, ***Anna Mercury***.

Avatar describes the monthly SF series as "a high-octane blend of retropunk science fiction and 21st century weird pulp action, with a beautiful and mysterious spy-adventurer."

"She floats and leaps around the city like she's Daredevil, Lara Croft and a character from ***Crouching Tiger*** all rolled into one," *Warren Ellis* said of the rebellious, sexy heroine with the ability to cloud men's minds, "but no one can get a good look at her. A lot of people don't even think she's real.

"She's real. It's the city of New Ataraxia that might not be real. And yet there she is in this weird retropolis out of American 1950's science fiction magazines, disrupting the activities of the War Department, Magnetic Science and the Metropolitan Police, apparently working for no-one but herself...because no-one living there would believe who she's working for."

Each issue features full-color art by *Facundo Percio*. "The pages are cinematic yet incredibly well 'photographed' at the same time," Ellis said in reference to Percio's art. "I personally love the fusion of European-style illustration with Anglo-American comics, and this guy's a perfect example."

Anna Mercury #1 marks the premiere of Ellis's NewPulp series. "Our readers made it very clear that they wanted more of the miniseries format that quickly made William Gravel (now the star of his own monthly series) a fan favorite," Avatar Press Editor-in-Chief William Christensen said. "These arcs are fast-paced, sharp, and wired tight--Just like ***Anna Mercury***. Every issue hits the ground running, pulling the reader into the plot at breakneck speed, and answering as many questions as it asks."

Anna Mercury #1, a $3.99 comic, is scheduled for April release.

Hell and Holy Wars

In 2008, DC continues their line of science fiction and supernatural-themed books with two new miniseries: ***Reign in Hell*** and ***Rann/Thanagar: Holy War***. "***Reign in Hell*** is written by *Keith Giffen* and drawn by *Matt Clark*," DC's *Dan DiDio* said. "It's the battle for control of Hell between Lord Satanus and Neron; it builds on all the mystic books that we've done so far. Pretty much every mystic character in the DC Universe will be involved with this in some way.

"***Rann/Thanagar: Holy War*** is a cosmic extravaganza produced by such cosmic craftsmen as *Jim Starlin* and *Ron Lim*. "This builds on all the science fiction storylines we've been doing since the ***Infinite Crisis*** build-up," DiDio said. ***Holy War's*** major players include "Adam Strange, Hawkman, Captain Comet, the Omega Men…basically, we've going to be pulling back a lot of different corners of the galaxy to bring characters back into the mix."

"One of the things that I like and one of the things we've seen unfolding in the DC Universe is that we have an incredible richness in our characters that inhabit our mystic realms, as well as in our space and science fiction arenas as well," DiDio told *Comic Shop Newsarama's Matt Brady*. "We've been exploring them in various ways over the past few years…I can point all the way back to ***Adam Strange*** before ***Infinite Crisis*** and we've had ***Day of Vengeance***, along with ***Shadowpact*** and ***Countdown to Adventure*** and ***Countdown to Mystery***.

"Both ***Countdown to Adventure*** and ***Countdown to Mystery*** were quite well received in my eyes, so much so that it restored my faith in regards to their particular genres. So what we're looking to do with these two projects is up the ante and create two major storylines that play within the DCU and really do affect the magic core of the DC Universe, and the science fiction side of the DC Universe.

"For these, we're building on previous themes that we began as far back as in ***Rann-Thanagar War***, ***Day of Vengeance***, and others, but I think we've enhanced the story and moved it to another level."

Reign in Hell focuses on DC's reigning master of hell. "As we see it, Neron is the 'Satan' character in the DC Universe," DiDio said. "It's something that we've alluded to, but never really explored deeply. It was explored somewhat when he was introduced in ***Underworld Unleashed***, but I don't think we ever realized his full potential. We caught glimpses of it in 52, but even with that, you could tell there was more.

"So we've crafted this series built around the concept of what happened when Neron was trapped in Fate's tower at the end of 52. What happens to Hell when its master is gone? This is the series that spins out from that concept, touches upon so many of our mystic characters, and brings characters into the fold that you might be surprised to see in this environment. There are a lot of fun reveals along the way.

"Basically, Lord Satannus and Blaze are challenging Neron for control of Hell, and have been assembling armies to attack Neron's forces who've been operating without him during his absence. What happens though, as a result of this war in Hell, is that all the mystic characters get called into service, their bodies on earth disappear, and they're pulled into hell to fight on the side of Lord Satannus or Neron."

Do either of the miniseries connect to upcoming events like ***Final Crisis*** or ***Trinity***, or do the events of these series run parallel to DC's other 2008 events? "Parallel," DiDio said. "Again, we're trying to provide as many options to our fans who want to see as many things going on as possible, without feeling like they have to buy everything across the line. We're basically taking everything that we've got and turning the heat up a notch or two. The other storylines and miniseries and weekly may not be connected to ***Final Crisis***, but they will feel as *important* as ***Final Crisis***."

Rann/Thanagar: Holy War #1 is scheduled for May release; ***Reign in Hell #1*** follows in June.

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Never Too Late for Zero

Thought you knew what ***Countdown to Final Crisis*** was counting down to? Well, the title seems to make it pretty clear—but before ***Final Crisis*** begins, DC has a very special zero issue slated for release just one week after ***Countdown to Final Crisis #1*** wraps up the series.

DC Universe #0 isn't so much an ending to ***Countdown***, however, as it is a beginning to several major events in the DC Universe. "Originally, we were going to do ***Countdown to Final Crisis #0*** - that's what ***Countdown*** has been counting down to: 51 to 0 – 52 issues in total, a year's worth of work," DC's *Dan DiDio* told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "Ultimately though, what happened was that when we were looking at how #0 was being created, we realized that in collecting ***Countdown to Final Crisis***, it would be hard to collect the #0 issue, because it would leave us on a cliffhanger at the end of the book. We felt that probably wasn't the best way to end a book, so we decided to end all the ***Countdown*** stories with #1, and therefore make the #0 issue separate. That's when it became ***Final Crisis #0***.

"Then, Grant was involved in the writing of ***Final Crisis #0*** of course, and Grant wanted Geoff to co-write it with him. But as we were building the book, we realized that the story wasn't contained to the stories that were flowing into ***Final Crisis***, involving New Gods and Monitors, but really touched upon so many major events going on throughout the DCU including: more hints to the Black Lanterns story, what's coming up in the Batman storylines, Superman's upcoming stories and Wonder Woman as well. Because it started to expand outside of ***Final Crisis***, we repositioned the book one more time, and now it's called ***DC Universe #0***.

"And since this is becoming more of a springboard to all of the DC Universe in 2008, we wanted to make this much more accessible to all of our fans and separate it out from ***Final Crisis*** and ***Countdown*** so it can really stand alone on its own feet. As such, it's going to sell for fifty cents – 24 pages by *Grant Morrison* and *Geoff Johns*, with art by a wide variety of folks including *Ivan Reis, Carlos Pacheco, Tony Daniel, George Perez, & Aaron Lopresti*.

Is it fair to describe this book as a snapshot of the DC Universe post-***Countdown*** complete with hints as to where things are headed before it all goes to hell in ***Final Crisis***? "Absolutely," DiDio said. "And there's a special narrator in it that we're not going to reveal until it comes out, but it's something that I think helps to propel the excitement of the DC Universe, and the vision we all share in moving forward."

"I really think ***DC Universe #0*** is going to have a strong tone and set the stage for where we're going to take the DC Universe," co-writer *Geoff Johns* said. "For me, #0 is the next phase—and a really damn good one. We worked really hard to design it as an entry point to the DC Universe for anybody. Even though we've got complexities and histories and tons of characters, ***DC Universe #0*** is really an entry point for everybody. We're trying to make it a place for current readers and older readers who maybe haven't read comics in a while or readers new to the DC Universe—the book is designed as a springboard for all of this coming stuff. It gives a sense of where the characters are going, who they are, and what their journeys are going to be. And it's drawn by some of the best guys in the business.

"For me, #0 is putting the stake in the ground and saying, 'Okay, we move forward from here.'

"And I have to add that it's really great to be back in the thick of it like this. Grant and I have been out of the center of it all for a while, and it's really exciting to get back into the center. ***52*** was unconnected to other things, and after that, we took a year off from that kind of stuff, have done our own books, but now it's all about getting back into the mix – into the center of it all again."

"While it does lay things out for ***Final Crisis***," DiDio added, "it also gives you the tone for the DC Universe in 2008, and sets up key storylines for a number of our major characters."

What are some of those major storylines? "You've got ***Final Crisis*** running, you'll have 'Batman: R.I.P.' in ***Batman***, along with another major and separate storyline in ***Detective***. There will be a major storyline building off of the Brainiac image that we've been showcasing around, feeding into the Superman stories which will feed into an important turning point in Superman's life before the year is out. There's also a big, epic-style Wonder Woman storyline coming from Gail this summer as well - along with the two miniseries, ***Rann/Thanagar: Holy War*** and ***Reign in Hell***—and of course, ***Trinity***.

"As we've set it up, all of our key franchises are involved in major storylines in their own series, and for the bigger picture, we've got ***Final Crisis*** and the miniseries. We don't want anything lost in the shuffle, so every book has to stand on its own, and feel as important as the biggest book we have.

"The DCU is back in spades!"

And best of all, ***DC Universe #0*** is scheduled to reach comic shops on the Wednesday before Free Comic Book Day—and that means that it'll offer legions of potential new readers an ultra-affordable entry point into DC's biggest events!

CSNsider

•DC has confirmed that acclaimed writer *James Robinson* will be returning to DC to take over as writer of ***Superman*** following *Kurt Busiek's* departure from the series (and if you don't know where Busiek is going, then you haven't read this week's front-page story!). The series will be Robinson's first work at DC since the "Face the Face" story, which was the initial "One Year Later" story in the ***Batman*** and ***Detective Comics*** series in 2006, and his first work on an ongoing series writer since his acclaimed ***Starman*** series which ran from 1994 through 2001. *Renato Guedes* will remain as the series' regular artist.

•***The Order***, the ***Initiative***-linked series by *Matt Fraction & Barry Kitson*, comes to an end with its tenth issue.

•However, *Matt Fraction* already has another gig to fill the hole in his schedule: he'll write the second monthly Iron Man title, ***Invincible Iron Man***, which debuts in May. The book, which will feature art by *Salvador Larroca*, will launch at about the same time that the ***Iron Man*** feature film debuts. The first arc pits Iron Man against Ezekiel Stane, the son of his late rival and arch-enemy Obadiah.

•*Geoff Johns* has signed an extension of his exclusive contract with DC Comics. "You always consider all of your options when you're faced with decisions like this, but really, it boiled down to the people I'm working with and the projects I'm working on," Johns told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "Between ***Green Lantern, Justice Society of America, Action Comics*** and the other books I've got brewing for '08 and '09…and working with *Gary Frank, Ivan Reis, Dale Eaglesham, Scott Kolins, Ethan Van Sciver* and another legend around the corner…I'm psyched to continue working for the company that made me fall in love with comics.

"I believe in DC Comics, I believe in the characters and have since I first discovered this wonderful universe. I believe in where we're going and what we're fighting for. You know, we can't take our readers for granted. We screw up, we lose. We gotta learn from our mistakes and the mistakes others make. We gotta fight hard to create better books every month that are worth your time. We love a good challenge so we're happy to do that. It keeps us honest."

•***Captain America #34***, the book that featured Winter Soldier's debut as the new Captain America, has sold out from Marvel. Rather than offering a standard second printing, Marvel is going back to press with a special "director's cut" issue featuring a new cover spotlighting the interior art of *Steve Epting*. This issue will feature bonus material, including *Ed Brubaker's* original script; look for it in mid-March.

•***Captain Marvel #3***, a surprise key book in the whole ***Secret Invasion*** story arc, sold out from Marvel days before the book officially went on sale; if there are still copies available at your local comic shop, grab 'em, because *Brian Reed* tosses some major curveballs into the whole Captain Marvel drama with this twist-filled issue. If you can't find a copy, don't fret too much, because a second printing is on the way.

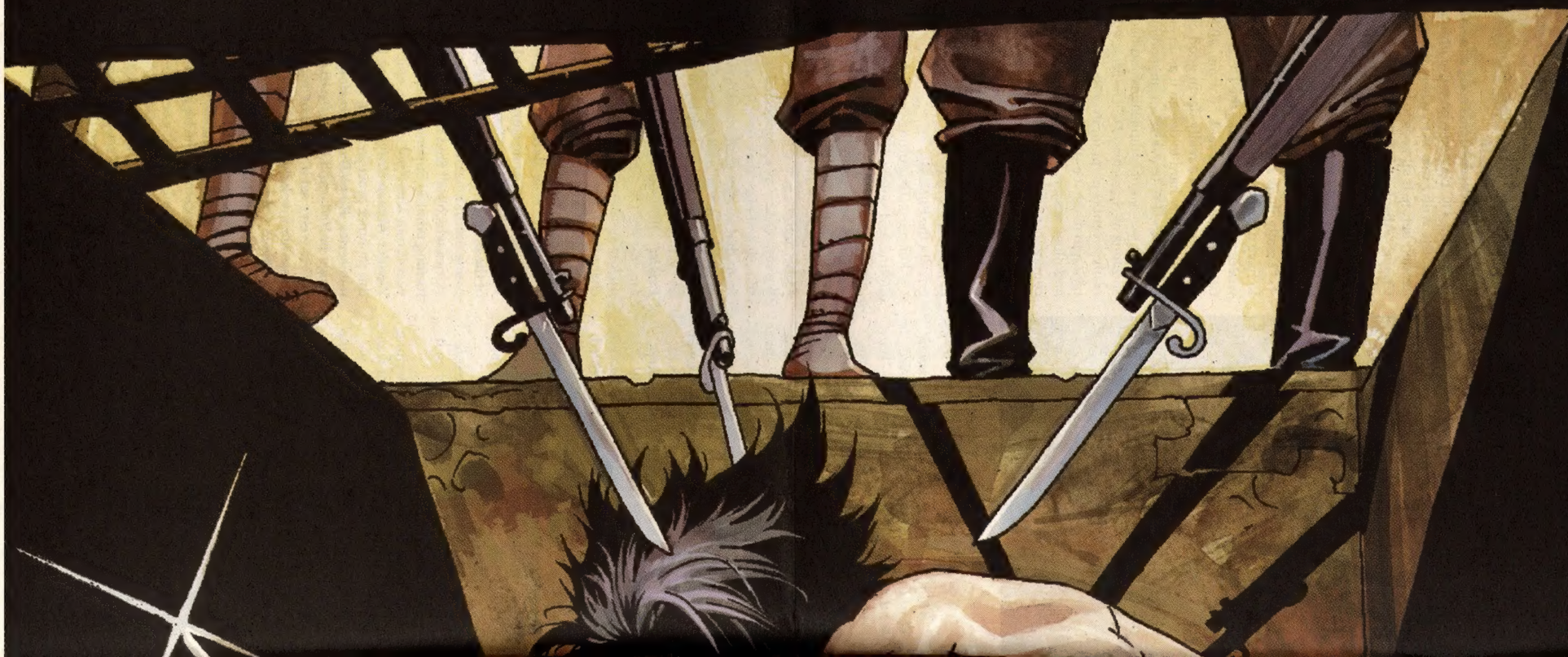
•Marvel has added "bloody variant" covers to both ***X-Force #2*** and #3. These are *not* limited variants; they feature the same art as the standard cover, just with a bit more sanguine accentuation.

•The Marvel Knights ***Logan*** miniseries will be offered in the standard full-color version and in an unlimited black and white variant

Continued on page 6

From *Lost* Writer Brian K. Vaughan

LOGAN



A CHILLING THREE-ISSUE LIMITED SERIES STARRING WOLVERINE!

MARCH 2008

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edition. As was the case with ***Wolverine #s 50-55***, these books will present the same interior art in story, *sans* color.

•Limited variant covers have been added to Marvel's offerings for ***Captain Marvel #4*** (*Terry Dodson*, 1 for 15), ***Ms. Marvel #25*** (*Terry Dodson*, 1 for 15), and ***Secret Invasion #1*** (*Leinil Yu*, 1 for 50). Additionally, a special Secret Variant version of ***Captain Marvel #4*** will also be offered; this variant will be mixed in with the regular copies of the same issue, and neither content nor availability has been announced.

•***World of Warcraft #3*** has sold out and is going back to press. The second printing will feature a black and white version of *Jim Lee's* cover art.

•DC has two more high-profile ***Absolute*** editions scheduled for late 2008: ***Absolute Ronin***, featuring an upscale treatment of the *Frank Miller* series, and ***Absolute Sandman Volume Four***, the final slipcased volume collecting *Neil Gaiman's* legendary long-form fantasy saga.

•*P. Craig Russell* is working on a four-issue miniseries adaptation of *Neil Gaiman's* ***Sandman: The Dream Hunters***, previously published by Vertigo as a novella with illustrations by *Yoshitaki Amano*. Look for it in late 2008.

•Following in the same format as ***Superman Chronicles*** and ***Batman Chronicles***, DC will launch ***Wonder Woman Chronicles*** and ***Green Lantern Chronicles*** in 2009.

•DC's Deluxe Editions hardcover line, will continue in 2008 and 2009 with such offerings as ***Jack Kirby's OMAC Omnibus***, ***Jack Kirby's Demon Omnibus***, ***DC Illustrated by Neal Adams***, and ***Camelot 3000***.

•Recut deluxe editions of *Brian K. Vaughan & Pia Guerra's* ***Y—The Last Man*** are also in the works, as are recut editions of *Warren Ellis & Darick Robertson's* ***Transmetropolitan***.

•In spite of earlier reports of their demise, ***DC Archives*** will continue in 2008 and 2009, although in reduced numbers, focusing on continuing already-established ***Archives*** series.

•To replace ***DC Archives*** in the collected editions schedule, the company will offer a line of ***DC Comics Classics Library*** hardcovers in 2009. "We want to feature classic stories and classic creators in upscale format hardcovers," DC's *Georg Brewer* said. "The stories have to be older than ten years, cannot be recently collected in hardcover, and aren't a part of an ongoing series. Look for for info on the first volumes in the ***DC Comics Classics Library*** series in an upcoming issue of ***CSN***.

•Vertigo revives a classic DC title in May with the debut of ***House of Mystery***. "This is a classic title given a new focus,"Vertigo's *Karen Berger* said. "What we're doing is keeping the title, but that's pretty much it. *Bill Willingham & Matt Sturges* have kept the house, the mystery, and the horror, but that's it. We want to abandon the eight-page format and keep it as a continuing series with a cast of characters, while still keeping it a book about stories.

"***House of Mystery*** deals with a waitress who winds up at the House of Mystery, stuck at this bar with a cast of strange people from different times; the course of the story reveals how she deals with being there, unable to escape. What's cool is that there will always be a six to eight page inset story drawn by different artists; the main artist is Italian artist *Luca Rossi*, but the inset stories will be drawn by established greats like *Bernie Wrightson, Jill Thompson*, as well as a number of new talents."

•***Madame Xanadu*** finally gets an origin story beginning in June, courtesy of Vertigo. "Madame Xanadu has always operated on the fringes of the DCU and Vertigo, but *Matt Wagner* is finally going to give her the attention that she deserves," *Karen Berger* said. "*Amy Hadley*, a new artist in her early 20s, is giving the series a contemporary look. Matt's creating a story about Madame Xanadu through the centuries, giving her an origin, explaining where Xanadu comes from, and what her relationship with the Phantom Stranger is."

•A reissue of the long-unavailable and highly-sought-after ***Vertigo Tarot Deck*** is in the works, with gold foil trim and a velvet drawstring bag.

•The next major new series in the works from Vertigo is ***Air***, by the ***Cairo*** team of *G. Willow Wilson* and *M.K. Perker*. "***Air*** is about an acrophobic stewardess; it's a journey through the world and eventually through time and space in a search for a mysterious guy she fell in love with--he could be a terrorist, could be a spy, could be Greek, could be Arab, could be Jewish—and it all comes together around a plot of espionage and adventure," Vertigo's *Karen Berger* said. "We'll be previewing eight pages of it in ***Madame Xanadu*** and in ***Vertigo: First Cuts***, which will be out in August. It's an ongoing monthly series—like such projects as ***Sandman*** and ***Y—The Last Man***, it *does* have an ending, but it will go on for a while."

•Wildstorm's *Jim Lee* confirmed that the ***Wildcats*** project he launched with writer *Grant Morrison* will continue, although in a different form. "I got onto the project because I wanted to work with Grant," Lee explained. "Working with Grant gives you a creative energy that's completely uncut. Unfortunately, creative passion can override common sense; I agreed to do ***Wildcats*** when I should have postponed it.

"That said, I want to work with Grant and he wants to work with me, so we're going to tell the ***Wildcats*** story we set out to tell. We're trimming the twelve-issue series down to six, and we'll produce a book that will be collected into a hardcover down the road. That's our goal—to produce one great story. It might take a little time, but I hope it'll be worth it. It makes more sense to have all the issues in the drawer before we come back out there. It'll be out of continuity, but I assure you that it'll be a great story."

•In addition, *Grant Morrison's* ***Authority*** will also be completed; "Grant will work with *Keith Giffen* to finish it up later this year," Wildstorm's *Hank Kanalz* said. "It will be part of what we're planning for Wildstorm—it'll dovetail into what you'll be reading in the regular monthly series."

•*Zander Cannon & Gene Ha* are working on a new ***Top 10*** series; look for the first issue in September.

•*Chuck Dixon & Butch Guice* are working on an alternate-history WWII book, ***Storming Paradise***, for Wildstorm.

•***Zombistas***, a Wildstorm series by *Peter Milligan & Karl Kerschl*, will tell the story of a US corporation developing an undead labor force in Mexico.

•***Red Herring***, a Wildstorm series from *David Tischman & Philip Bond*, tells the story of a small time con man who gets caught up in global conspiracies.

•*Clay Moore & Tony Harris* are working on a new superhero series, ***The Whistling Skull***. "It's a generational superhero story about the problems with a superheroic identity passed on from generation to generation," Wildstorm's *Hank Kanalz* said.

•Wildstorm is following up their ***World of Warcraft*** series with a new miniseries that supports the ***WoW: Wrath of the Lich King*** expansion pack.

•A second ***Heroes*** hardcover collection is in the works for the fall.

•*Warren Ellis's* script for ***Planetary #27*** is in the house; *John Cassaday* is already at work on the art, and Wildstorm will solicit the book as soon as the art is done.

•In conjunction with this summer's ***Dark Knight*** Batman-Joker film, DC Direct is producing a 1:6 scale ***Batman Deluxe Action Figure***, two resin collectibles (one bust, one statue), and prop replicas that include batarangs and more.

•Warner Home Video is enlisting the aid of six different filmmakers to produce a fall-release original video, ***Batman: Gotham Knight***. In conjunction with that, DC Direct will release a monochrome statue based on one of the segments of this original animation.

•AmeComi figures of ***Donna Troy*** and ***Zatanna*** are in the works.

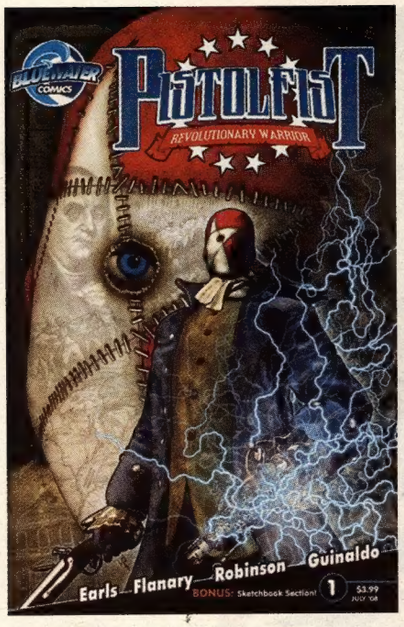
•DC Direct's ***Wonder Woman Museum Quality Statue*** continues the line of 1:4 scale deluxe mixed-media high-end collectors' statues.

•Sixties Bat-fans take note: DC Direct is working on a ***Batmobile Statue*** based on the classic *George Barris* design used in the classic 1960s television series., complete with working lights.

•December sees the release of a real working ***Bat Signal Prop Replica***, a heavyweight metal design complete with halogen bulbs that project a distinctive bat-symbol dozens of feet.

•***Pistolfist***, the saga of a masked runaway slave who becomes an American Revolutionary War legend, is joining the Bluewater Productions lineup in July, just in time for Independence Day. The series, which was originally scheduled for release from Alias before the publisher changed its focus to religious-themed comics, follows the saga of a mysterious, masked runaway slave whose destiny is helplessly entwined with that of a famous, yet frail, Benjamin Franklin.

"To say I'm excited about bringing Pistolfist to Bluewater would definitely be an understatement," creator *J.S. Earls* said. "They're as passionate about and as committed to their creations as I am about mine. Several publishers have expressed an inter-



est in Pistolfist, but none of them were as honest or as focused as Bluewater Productions."

The monthly series begins in July.

Dynamic Duo X 2

Why stop with just two?

The Family Dynamic, a new six-issue miniseries by *J. Torres, Tim Levins & Dan Davis*, features four Dynamic heroes... and as the title indicates, they're a family.

Torres described the project as "a reunion project for me and Tim, as we started out in comics together many years ago on a comic called ***Copybook Tales***. Back then we were a couple of college students trying to break into the industry with a minicomic about comic book wannabes, and now we're both married with a kid each and working together on a miniseries about a superhero family. It comes full circle rather nicely..."

Oddly enough, ***Family Dynamic*** started with "this team of villains I created for a book that I was working on with *Jason Bone* several years ago called ***Alison Dare***," Torres told ***Comic Shop Newsarama's*** *Matt Brady*. "It was a team of elementals called Fuego, Agua, Gust and Dust. Don't think that ever went anywhere, but somewhere along the way they become a family of good guys in my head. I slowly fleshed out their backstory, adding power rings, an arch-nemesis, etc. and then... ***The Incredibles*** came out so I ended up shelving the idea for a few years."

That family became the Spencers, whose power rings give them incredible abilities. "Prior to the current team led by Sloan Spencer, his father Sam led the first team of his generation back in the '60s. Three from that first team died at the hands of a villain named Dark Wraith, and Sam retired shortly thereafter and put the rings out of commission, as it were. However, when the Dark Wraith returned for him later on, Sloan and his family used the rings to save gramps. When our story opens, Sloan's family has been the new Family Dynamic for only about a year."

Torres offered a little background on each member of the family. "Sloan, a.k.a. Pyralis the fire elemental, is the dad and leader of the team. He's an army recruiter by day and tries to run the team almost like his own little unit. Gina, a.k.a. Sirocco the air elemental, is the mom and she's a homemaker, the peacekeeper, and the one who keeps the family from becoming too dysfunctional. The kids are Luca (mid-teens), a.k.a. Troylus the water elemental, and Gio (early teens), a.k.a. Terran the earth elemental. The older one is a music lover who takes after his Aunt Maeve (who owns a record company) more than anyone else, while the baby of the family tries to take after his dad and has a love of corn dogs.

"They live in Storm City, a fictional Canadian metropolis. There are other superheroes in the are, like the aforementioned duo, but we also meet one neighbor from the south, a superhero named Defender who hails from "Motor City." There are also other heroes in the Dynamics' past, like the first elemental team and the Wu Xing Clan from China who we'll hear about in the story.

"Their main baddie is the Dark Wraith, who's been haunting the family for decades. This again ties into the generational elements we're playing with within the whole superhero family 'genre,' themes of legacy and 'sins of the father' visiting the son, etc. We're trying to make it intriguing and mysterious, and hopefully readers have fun with some of the twists and turns we've set up."

The Family Dynamic #1 is slated for June release from DC.

Coming from Dark Horse in May

Fan-favorite good girl *Bettie Page* is the subject of the new ***Bettie Page 6" Statue***, which captures the likeness and the whimsical personality of the cult favorite.

Will Eisner's iconic hero is captured in three dimensions by sculptor *Tony Cipriano* in the ***Classic Spirit Mini-Bust***.

Akiko Ikeda's tales of the mischievous cat Dayan and his woodland friends in the magical realm of Wachifield makes its American debut with the release of ***Dayan Books 1-4***.

Japan's favorite furball is invading the United States, and Dark Horse is helping to lead the charge with the release of the ***Domo 8" Flocked Vinyl Figure***. The vinyl figure is offered in four colors– Classic Brown, Fabulous Fuchsia, Royal Blue, and Polar White.

Ghost Talker's Daydream Volume One presents a sexy and disturbing horror tale by *Sankichi Meguro & Saki Okuse*. It tells the story of Misaki Saiki, a young woman with a troubled past, who is a professional dominatrix in one of Tokyo's most exclusive S&M clubs. However, her real money is something she likes even less than being a dominatrix. Ever since childhood, Misaki has had the ability to see and communicate with ghosts, and that talent is put to use by the Livelihood Protection Agency, who pairs Misaki with Souichiro Kadotake, a martial artist who happens to be deathly afraid of ghosts.

Comic's loveable, big, bumbling duckling stars in his own oversized collection with the release of ***Harvey Classics Library Volume Four: Baby Huey***. The hefty compendium, blending color and black and white material, collects over four hundred pages of long out-of-print Baby Huey stories from the Golden Age of comics.

Christopher Golden, Joe R. Lansdale, China Mieville, Barbary Hambly, Ken Bruen, Tad Williams, and others offer their take on the famous occult adventurer in ***Hellboy: Oddest Jobs***, a collection of prose short stories accompanied by illustrations from ***Hellboy*** creator *Mike Mignola*.

Phillip Gelatt, Ethaen Beavers, & Ronda Pattison do the honors on the kid-friendly ***Indiana Jones Adventures Volume One***, an original digest-sized graphic novel produced in the same popular format as Dark Horse's ***Star Wars: The Clone Wars Adventures*** series.

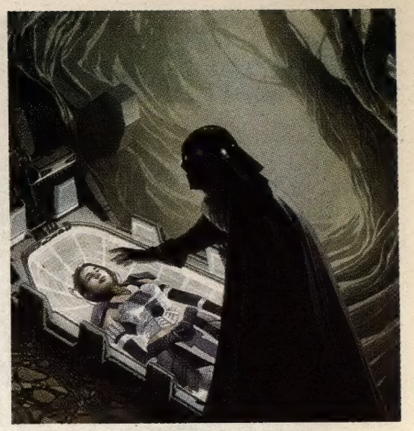
Dark Horse adapts this year's long-awaited Indy film in the two-part ***Indiana Jones & the Kingdom of the Crystal Skull*** limited series.

Writer/artist *Shannon Wheeler* offers a compact glimpse into his offbeat mind with ***Postage Stamp Funnies***, a set of three tiny 3" x 2" hardcover books that features offbeat humorous works presented in a series of postage-stamp-sized panels.

Dark Horse's ***Samurai Champloo Mini-Bust*** series continues with the release of ***Jin***, a 5" hand-painted bust that is faithful to every nuance of the Japanese anime on which it's based.

Dreamworks Studios animators, including *Dave Pimentel, JJ Villard, Dave Derrick, Jenny Lerew, Ken Morrissey, Keith Baxter, & Ennio Torreson* tell stories too big for the silver screen in ***Scrambled Ink***, a 176-page original hardcover anthology.

The epoch-spanning mega-crossover

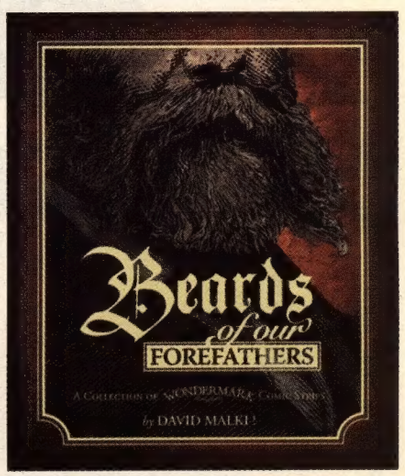


Vector series continues in ***Star Wars: Dark Times #11*** by *Mick Harrison, Dough Wheatley, & Dave McCaig*. Beginning the second phase in a yearlong, galaxy-changing storyline, part five of "Vector" puts the smuggling crew of the Uhumele in their toughest predicament yet, puts Darth Vader in a traitor's sights, and potentially puts the entire galaxy at risk!

Weta Collectibles' line of Who collectibles continues with their ***Doctor Who Classic Series Statue: The Master and the Auton***, depicting the third Doctor (played by *Jon Pertwee*) as he appeared in the episode "Terror of the Autons"; and ***Doctor and Davros***, depicting the fourth Doctor (as portrayed by *Tom Baker)* from "Genesis of the Daleks."

Dark Horse collected editions include:

- ***Aliens Omnibus Volume Four***, collecting 376 pages of long-unavailable ***Aliens*** material;
- ***Chronicles of Conan Volume Fifteen: The Corridor of Mullah-Kajar & Other Stories***, collecting remastered versions of the tales originally presented in Marvel's ***Conan the Barbarian #s 116-121*** and ***Conan Annual #2***;
- ***The Complete K Chronicles***, a collection of the Harvey Award-winning semi-autobiographical comic stirp by *Keith Knight;*
- ***Penny Arcade Volume Five: The Case of the Mummy's Gold***, collecting every strip posted on pennyarcade.com in 2004;
- ***The Umbrella Academy: Apocalypse Suite***, collecting the miniseries by *Gerard Way & Gabriel Ba* along with an expanded sketchbook section;
- ***Usagi Yojimbo Volume 22: Tomoe's Story***, collecting *Stan Sakai's* ***Usagi Yojimbo Color Special #s 1-3*** (in black and white) and ***Usagi Yojimbo #s 90-93***; and
- ***Wondermark: Beards of Our Forefathers***, a collection of *David Malki's* Ignatz-nominated comic strip.



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